

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

In the following year the Archbishop visited Rome, and from the ancient city he addressed a letter to John de Lewes, granting two acres of land at Crowborough to found a chapel there on the waste, called Gilderedge, with a cemetery attached, in place of a formerly existing one. This is possibly the locality called Alsihorne which Domesday credits to the Manor of Malling, for no other record mentions any land in that immediate neighbourhood as belonging to the see.¹ This is the last we hear of Archbishop Peckham in connection with Sussex, for his career came to an end not long afterwards with his death at Mortlake and burial at Canterbury.

W. HENEAGE LEGGE.

RELIGION ON BOARD SHIP.

II.

TURNING to the mercantile marine and other private services at sea, we find in all trades and vocations afloat that the Lord has His own witnesses, who claim our sympathy, encouragement, and help in what is sometimes the very fiery ordeal of lives lived for God amongst His avowed enemies. These, His tried servants at sea, need the grace and strength derived from Holy Communion just as much as men-of-war's men; and the best clergymen ministering to men of the sea have not been unmindful of their souls' great need.

In the records of the Thames Church Mission, originated in 1844, after the example of the Bristol Channel Roadsteads Mission, commenced by the Rev. John Ashley, LL.D., in 1835, we find occasional mention of the Holy Communion afloat, which, in the early days of that mission, was evidently habitual. In 1848 the Rev. W. Holderness, chaplain of the Thames sailing church ship *Swan*, administered the Holy Communion on board that vessel to five sailors from merchant ships on the river.

On the 5th January, 1851, the Lord's Supper was administered by the Rev. W. Holderness to thirty-one merchant sailors on board the church ship *Swan*, in the presence of thirty other seamen, together forming a congregation of sixty-one persons. Amongst the communicants were three brothers, captains of colliers near by, who by a coincidence met at the Lord's table. There was also present a devout sailor, who

¹ Alsihorne, the modern Alchorne, is at Crowborough. The entry in Domesday is somewhat obscure: "Willelmus de Cahainges tenet unam virgam de isto manerio [Malling] et est ad Alsihorne."

took part in a similar service on board the *Swan* three years before, but who since that time had not communicated for lack of the opportunity.

In the year 1860 the Lord's Supper was administered by the Rev. Daniel Greatorex, eight times to 109 communicants on board the T.C.M. sailing church *Swan*; and the same number of times, but to 132 communicants, in the following year, 1861; and in 1862 there were seven administrations afloat, by the Rev. T. W. Hathaway, M.A., with 108 communicants.

In 1867 we find the Rev. C. R. de Haviland, M.A., T.C.M. chaplain, conducting Divine service, with the Lord's Supper, to usually more than twenty cadets monthly, on board the Thames Marine Officers' training-ship *Worcester*, in which Admiral Togo was subsequently a cadet. On one occasion in this year there were forty-one cadets amongst the communicants.

On board the *Chichester* training-ship off Greenhithe, in 1873, after the most hearty service it was ever the pleasure of the Rev. J. T. Gadsdun, then the T.C.M. chaplain, to conduct, he administered the Lord's Supper to the sailor boys who had been confirmed two days before, including several of the officers, forty-one in all. He had in 1874 at one celebration on board the same ship eighty-four communicants; and in 1876 106 communicants partook of the Lord's Supper on one occasion.

It is recorded that, in 1874, the T.C.M. chaplain, the Rev. J. T. Gadsdun, held Divine service in the forecabin of a steamship on the Thames, and, at the request of a lady on board, administered the Lord's Supper to eleven persons. The captain kindly placed at the chaplain's disposal an unoccupied part of the ship, where they had a very solemn Holy Communion.

"Launching out into the Deep," recently published by the S.P.C.K., tells the story of the Church taking to the waters in the outer roadsteads or anchorages. It tells how, about the year 1858, after a Sunday service on board an emigrant ship sheltering in Kingroad, and a special *Te Deum* for recent deliverances at sea, the Rev. Clement D. Strong, M.A., chaplain for the Bristol Channel Roadsteads, had an administration of the Holy Communion in the cabin for sailors and emigrants.

"There, in that ship, the soul is cared for as well as the body. There God is honoured and worshipped; service is held every Sunday, and that helps to keep one straight. But here, in our ship, there is nothing of the kind." These words were uttered in the year 1879 by one of the engineers of a "tramp" (cargo) steamship from the Black Sea, in Falmouth Roads, a couple of miles from the landing-place. After a week-day

service on board this vessel by the roadstead chaplain, the Rev. James Stephens, the engineer was complaining that, though his own ship was otherwise comfortable, yet there was to him the greatest of all wants on board. The other ship alluded to was also a "tramp" steamer, which had arrived in the roads the previous night from a foreign voyage to await the owner's orders as to the destination of the cargo.

A few days later, not knowing anything of these vessels, or of anyone on board them, or of the above conversation, the present writer received in London a most cordial letter from the captain of the steamship *Enmore* in Falmouth Roads, overflowing with praise and thanksgiving to God for what he stated to be His marvellous goodness in permitting him to "show the Lord's death" on board a merchant-ship, and that vessel commanded by himself. He could not contain himself with delight, and did not know any comrade who would enter into his great joy, as he was sure his correspondent, known to him only by name, would do right heartily.

The roadstead chaplain subsequently explained that, going on board the steamship *Enmore* referred to, he found it even as the engineer of the other "tramp" had said, only the half had not been told him. When at sea, in addition to the two services on Sundays, the captain held also a Bible-class in the afternoon, and once or twice during the week. A large room on the upper deck had been fitted up as a men's school and reading-room, in which some had been taught to read and write, and a good library and innocent games were provided. One of the engineers played the harmonium at the captain's services and acted as librarian. As Captain F. B. Hopkins, of the *Enmore*, was not on board, the chaplain proceeded to hold Divine services on board other ships at the anchorage, returning to the *Enmore* about 6 p.m., to receive a warm welcome from the captain. He at once gave permission for the crews from neighbouring ships to come on board and join in Divine service. The prayerless "tramp" visited in the morning had already gone to sea.

The captain's work for God having been evidently blessed to several souls on board, the chaplain's offer to administer the Holy Communion after the ordinary service was gladly accepted. The large cabin was well filled by seamen at the first part of the service, the captain reading the prayers and lessons. Whilst the non-communicants were leaving the cabin, the chaplain had a private conversation and prayer with the captain and an officer who was afraid of approaching so rich a feast unworthily, but who afterwards remained to communicate, and devoutly expressed his great thankfulness, as did also a seaman from a barque near by, in which he mani-

fested to his comrades a bright example of the Christian life, in one of the most uninviting of forecastles.

Captain Hopkins himself was much moved, and said to the roadstead chaplain: "I thought a new life was dawning on the waters when I heard the first service on board ship; but this is beyond all my hopes. What a blessed privilege!" It was indeed a cheering sight to the ambassador of Christ to see the godly captain and those he had been the instrument of leading to the Saviour in sweet communion at the Lord's table in an open roadstead. There seemed on board this ship such a reality infused into the word "Communion" and into the whole of this evangelical service. If to human hearts a first Communion on board ship was a scene so joyous, what could it have been to Him who the same night that He was betrayed ordained that holy feast, and who had spread with richest bounties the sacred board?

Next evening, at a farewell service on board the *Enmore* in Falmouth Roads, the Rev. James Stephens said good-bye to all on board, who had just been three days at the anchorage awaiting orders as to their port of discharge. Writing to the chaplain from the next port, Captain Hopkins said: "Is it not something joyous to meet on arrival a friend and brother in Jesus, who speaks, as one of my lads truly said, 'As if he knew all about it afore he told us'? Is it not something to make tears of joy flow to think that we could in our floating home receive our dear Lord's Body and Blood, and know that He was smiling on us on that 4th of June (1879) as we obeyed His last wish? . . . In a letter from my owner he says he would have given much to have been one of the communicants."

A year later Captain Hopkins wrote the Missions to Seamen prize essay on "Lay Work in the Merchant Navy," an excellent and helpful manual for officers, which, we regret to add, is out of print.

Boarding a steamship in Falmouth Roads one Saturday in 1893, the roadstead chaplain, the Rev. C. A. Walker, found four earnestly devout seamen on board, two of whom were Honorary Missions to Seamen Helpers for promoting godly living amongst their shipmates. One mission helper had enrolled in his total abstinence pledge book the names of a goodly number of his shipmates. Asked as to receiving the Holy Communion on board, the glad response came: "Oh yes! Wherever I am I partake of it. It is such a blessing to use the means of grace!" Thereupon Mr. Walker promised to visit the ship next day, and to spread the Lord's table on

the Lord's Day for anyone who would come in faith and penitence to that holy feast.

There was a short, choppy sea on Sunday morning, which made the Mission cutter *Sickle* somewhat lively as she "heel-and-toed to it," and made her rather unsteady for holding the service on board her. So the chaplain boarded the steamship, and had a solemn gathering in a very small compartment amidships. It was felt to be a very precious season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord of sea and land. The ante-Communion service was read, and an earnest and instructive exposition given of St. Paul's instructions on the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 23-26), and then, after a suitable hymn, the non-communicants withdrew, and the Lord's Supper was administered to three of the crew. Although crowded together in close proximity, nothing could have been more reverent than the demeanour of those godly seamen receiving the Holy Communion, in their own ship, to their "great and endless comfort." Thus writes one present: "Upon the unfathomable ocean, as well as on the land, the mighty witness to the all-sufficient Atonement of the Lamb of God on Calvary's Cross is proclaimed 'till He come.'"

"Thou art coming; at Thy table
We are witnesses for this."

III.

What blessings flowed to the crew of a British barque outward bound in 1900, with a three years' voyage before them, which had put back into Falmouth Roads, where the three apprentices on board received the Holy Communion twice from the roadstead chaplain, the Rev. C. A. Walker. On the first occasion the celebration took place in the cabin of the Mission cutter *Sickle* alongside; but the next administration was in the apprentices' little deck-house. This apartment being too small to contain a table, one of their sea-chests did duty as a holy table, on which the fair linen was duly spread and the Communion vessels arranged. Well might these apprentices, after the administration in their deck-house, exclaim: "Now this place is holy!" One of them said: "I wish my box had been used for the Holy Table!"

A few months afterwards one of these lads was washed overboard and drowned at sea. He had been prepared for, and received the rite of, Confirmation ashore; but before he had time to receive his first Communion the barque left London, so that these roadstead administrations were this lad's first Communions.

All three apprentices were enrolled as Honorary Missions

to Seamen Helpers for the promoting of godly living amongst their shipmates, and before resuming their voyage they were supplied with a set of similarly-paged prayer and hymn books and a book of short sermons, for united worship at sea. Two years later one of these communicants reported, from a South African port, that, without interruption, they had conducted Divine services on board regularly every Sunday, and held meetings for prayer on Thursday evenings. Their little half-deck had soon proved too small for their congregations, when the carpenter invited them to use his shop. The captain subsequently, noticing the increased and willing attendances of the crew at Divine worship, offered the use of his cabin, where he himself and the officers took it in turn to conduct the services. When this barque called into Falmouth Roads, homeward bound after a three years' voyage, the two communicants were found still witnessing a good confession for Christ, by assisting in holding Divine service regularly. Well might one of them write to Mr. Walker: "What a difference the ship is now as regards homeliness and comfort to the time I first joined her in London! . . . Wherever she goes she leaves a good name behind her."

The chaplain to merchant seamen must not only be ready to seize the passing opportunity, but to minister to all nationalities, whether on board British ships or serving under their own flags. In 1904 the roadstead chaplain at Falmouth, boarding a Swedish barque just arrived in a leaky condition, found that the captain and crew were devout, Christian seamen, who worshipped God every Lord's Day. The chaplain conducted service on the following Sunday, and nearly all the crew stayed for the Holy Communion which followed, in the "place where prayer was wont to be made." It was preceded by an address on the Lord's Supper, and followed by devout prayer in Swedish from the captain and several of the crew, who very heartily thanked the chaplain for his much-valued ministrations.

Ten months later the same Swedish barque called again in Falmouth Roads, when the captain gratefully accepted the chaplain's offer to conduct Divine worship, asking that he "might have the same hymns we sang ten months ago, when last we were here." But the crew had been changed, and none of the new men were communicants except the captain, so that the Holy Communion could not be administered on board.

In the Waterford estuary, in 1892, after a service in a small coasting vessel sheltering in the roadstead, the attention of the chaplain, the Rev. F. Townsend, was called by the captain to improvements in his cabin, whereby he would "be able to

have service more comfortably." On this remark, the chaplain suggested the Lord's Supper on the following Sunday. The captain had never partaken of the Holy Communion, though he had been many years an active Christian worker, but he gladly acceded to the suggestion. Several devout seamen were invited by the captain from neighbouring ships at the anchorage.

Though the confined cabin accommodation was very crowded, the sailors were most devout and earnest. The chaplain began the Communion Service by reading two of the exhortations, afterwards making a slight pause in case any seamen wished to leave the cabin. Finding all in earnest prayer, he went on with the service, at which all present devoutly communicated, and a very solemn and reverent celebration was concluded with a very hearty Doxology. All seemed filled with holy joy and thankfulness, and during the remainder of the time their ships were in that roadstead there appeared to be a much higher religious tone on board; both in the cabins and in the forecastles they were more spiritually minded. This was the first Communion service ever conducted on board that ship. They had run into that roadstead for shelter from the contrary gale, and to await a change of wind, and here many of them had had the opportunity afforded them at the Lord's table, for the first time in their lives on board ship, to offer and present unto the Lord themselves, their souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Him. May those officers and seamen who, on board that coasting vessel, were partakers of the Holy Communion be filled with His grace and heavenly benediction!

In the present century, when British ships were laid up in San Francisco Bay, waiting for cargoes, it has been usual for the Rev. Arthur Varney, M.A., or his fellow-chaplains, to hold Sunday services regularly on board, with the Holy Communion from time to time. On one occasion, in 1902, at short notice, the Bishop of California, the day before sailing, went out to a British ship and confirmed one of the boys in the half-deck, before his shipmates. Next morning, early, before the ship sailed, Mr. Varney went on board and had a celebration in the half-deck, at which three or four of the ship's company communicated. These communions in the Far West, in one of the most iniquitous ports which British sailors enter, were greatly valued by seamen, and were especially valuable as a witness to their Lord before their shipmates.

Trawl fishermen when on the deep sea are just as ready as deep-water sailors to respond to invitations to communicate. The Missions to Deep-Sea Fishermen, from its earliest foundation in 1883, made it a point with volunteer clergymen who

pay holiday visits to the North Sea fleets to administer the Lord's Supper.

In an interesting account of the first Sunday which the Rev. W. A. Bathurst, M.A., Vicar of Holy Trinity, Eastbourne, spent among the Deep-Sea fishermen of the North Sea, on board a mission vessel of that society, on May 8, 1887, he well says: "The North Sea Fishermen are either for Christ or against Him; and when they are on the Lord's side He is their All-in-all. Hypocrisy, formalism, or perfectionism, as far as my experience went, seem as foreign to their nature spiritually as are cowardice or deceit morally."

At the close of a three hours' afternoon service, with sixty-eight fishermen from the fishing fleet assembled in the hold of the mission vessel, Mr. Bathurst writes: "When this was ended, I went to our cabin to fetch the vessels for the Lord's Supper, and to robe in my surplice, Captain Sanders, R.N. (a helper), meanwhile enrolling many members of the Scripture Reading Union. Returning, I found no less than forty-six waiting for the privilege of commemorating our Saviour's dying love, and, after a few words on 'This do in remembrance of Me,' I administered the sacred memorials to as true-hearted a congregation as perhaps I ever had around me. Most impressive it was on that far watery waste, in company with fishermen such as formed the first-called disciples of the Master Himself, thus to celebrate the central act of all time."

Cut off from their Kentish homes and families for weeks or months, and from all Church life and public means of grace, the crew of the barge *Fortunatus*, of Rochester, were at work on a wreck off the Holm Islands in the Bristol Channel. It was the summer of 1892, when the mission cutter, with the Rev. C. W. H. Browne, B.A., roadstead chaplain, on board, ran alongside, and found the barge in charge of a godly skipper, and manned in part by godly men, whom he invited to the Lord's Supper in their own little fore-castle on the morrow. Bunks on either side, a table occupying the central space, and a couple of benches, afforded all the accommodation available. It was close quarters. When, next day, the eleven communicants were packed in, there was no room for much movement, even after the three non-communicants had withdrawn. After a brief address, the service in which they were engaged was explained, and Toplady's hymn "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," was quietly and solemnly sung:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling,"

and the Holy Communion was reverently administered. The Sacrament sanctified that fore-castle, not the fore-castle the

Sacrament. Many sailors, fishermen, and bargemen, no longer strangers to their Lord's table, are found ready and willing when such opportunities are afforded them to obey their Lord's command, "This do in remembrance of Me," given "on the same night that He was betrayed," which is just as binding as the final command, now more widely recognised: "Go ye unto all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

The lonely lightships are often moored in exposed positions, some distance from land, so that the presence of clergymen on board are apt to be "like angels' visits, few and far between." But when they are so visited, they are as likely as any other vessels to have communicants on board. The several lightships of the Goodwin Sands are visited from time to time by the Missions to Seamen chaplain from Deal. The Rev. T. S. Treanor, M.A., describes such a visit on Christmas Day, 1902, to the *Gull* lightship. Receiving a warm welcome, the crew assembled in the spacious forecabin for Divine service, including Holy Communion. The table was covered with the Trinity flag, and the cup, the paten, and the flagon, the bread and the wine, were covered with a fair white linen cloth. The chaplain, in surplice and hood, read the ante-Communion service. The recitation of the Nicene Creed by all standing was almost dramatic in its impressiveness, and as the vessel rose to the swell and the chain cables strained and vibrated, the immortal words rang out: "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven."

Accompanied by the harmonium—an old acquaintance of all hands—"Hark! the herald angels" was sung, and during the address, from the text, "A Saviour which is Christ the Lord," the crew sat round the table, and the chaplain at the head, some of the men being on each side of him. Their calling and occupation, as well as their attitude—some leaning outwards to see better and others forward to listen—recalled with startling vividness the Last Supper itself. Eight of us, writes the chaplain, knelt round the long, low table, now in use, transformed into the table of the Lord. As we "seafarers all" gathered round the Lord's board, in brotherhood of calling and Master, we all felt, and perhaps never more keenly, that the sacred rite was not merely, as the Agape of old, "a supporter of love, a solace of poverty, and a disciple of humility," in its social aspect, but also to our own souls a proclamation of the Lord's atoning death and sacrifice, "finished on the cross," to the end that by faith in His blood we might be led to an appreciation of the same.

These examples, culled from all times, from all classes of

seafaring men, and from all descriptions of vessels, will, we hope, supply a sufficient answer to those who would deny the Lord's Supper to communicants on board their ships, and prevent them from "showing the Lord's death" before their shipmates.

But surely the will of the Lord goes far beyond anything that obtained for souls on the seas in the past, or obtains now. He has in store for sailors such "showers of blessing" as only the narrow, chilling heart of His earthly Church delays. When we pray Him to endow with the mighty aid of His Holy Spirit His ambassadors who now work to the glory of His Name in distant lands and at home, and that myriads of true worshippers may draw nigh to Him in spirit and in truth on His Holy Day, and that He will cause myriads to devoutly approach Christ's holy table to realize in their happy personal experience there that His banner of love is over them, shall our aspirations be bounded by the tidal mark wherever ocean rolls?

It was in no such mincing spirit as to declaring unto sailors only part of the Counsel of God, that, in 1904, the Committee of the Missions to Seamen, in closing their Annual Report, wrote:—"Imagine the commerce of the world dedicated to God, and realizing the motto on the Royal Exchange, 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof'; the Church claiming that 'the sea is His,' and pleading the ancient promise, 'Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters'; the British Empire recognising that it is 'the Lord which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters'; then, when every crew serving under the Red Cross in the British ensign waits on the Lord in holy worship and renews its strength, might we not expect the Holy Spirit of God to 'cast all their sins into the depths of the sea,' and 'the abundance of the sea to be converted unto God' in Christ? Then indeed might seamen of many nations 'sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth'—a glorious song of praise from them 'that go down to the sea, and all that is therein.'"

COMMANDER, R.N.

